

HOUSE OF LORDS 22

This is *House of Lords*, a zeen by, for and about publishing and publishers, GMing and GMs. It runs no games, and is available to just about anybody. It's composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and an array of letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Hopefully, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth. But if you'd rather read about our topics somewhere else, *Diplomacy Digest* has printed the most faithful reproductions of our "New Business" topic to date.

"I'm less impressed with the fairness of *House of Lords* than I used to be." - Mark Berch
"*HoL* is loaded with useful info, it's just stuck in between the hot air." - Gerald Todd
"I really like *HoL*. Very thought provoking, and usually pertinent (except when the feuding stuff comes in—I don't give two hoots about who said what to whom, unless it was funny.)" - Rich McKey

House of Lords has been what you've made it. And we thank you very much.

You can get this zeen any of three different ways. First of all, by sending me one American Dollar per issue. Second, by trading publications with me. Third, if you don't pub, but get some interesting zeens which I don't get, I may be willing to trade for a few issues of those. Make me an offer.

I also expect a fair amount of participation from all of you out there. This zeen sinks or swims on the basis of your contributions. Yes, we spell it "zeen."

Your publisher for this evening is Dick Martin, 17601 Lisa Dr, Rockville, MD 20855-1319.

Each subheading has at one time been the subject of a New Business "feature." That's how we've choosen topics, more or less.

announcements

The following is a public message board. The opinions herein do not necessarily reflect the opinions or the interests of the editor.

services

Jim Burgess is willing to help the next USOS head, Vince Lutterbie (who has formally announced his appointment to old testament prophet). Now, if Vince were a subber here, he might see this message. Jim-Bob, why not drop him a card? I'm sure any of us former orphan custodians would be happy to help in an emergency.

The Census is lumbering slowly toward completion. Any late address lists sent to me are still welcome.

Thanks to all those wonderful folks doing the Melinda Holley Award for their contributions to the MNC/UC and all other worthy dipdom services.

Also thanks to the PDO Auction for contributions to the MNC/UC, Census, and other worthy services.

Tom Nash has put out his first issue of the *Zeen Register* and it looks very good. Clocking in at sixty two pages, it's full of reviews, info, and other assorted tidbits. Subs cost \$1.50 an issue, but trades are welcome.

"NOTICE: Chris Carrier is fraudulently claiming to be editor of KGO's Zeen Directory. The editorial staff of all KGO publications, in particular KGO'ZD, is appointed by the Registrar of KGO; Carrier has received no such appointment. The publication by Chris Carrier (and anyone he appoints) which purports to be the Known Game Openings Zeen Directory is an unauthorized fake. Carrier has no connection to KGO and no rights to any KGO publications. His veracity, and the veracity of those who support his fraudulent claim, is therefore at best questionable." - Robt Sacks

William Lydick is the Orphan Games Archivist. Sending him copies of your zeens as they are published may provide a form of insurance—if you orphan your games he should be able to use current information to restart them. He might also write reviews for the real KGO'ZD. Maybe.

Number Mania continues: Conrad von Metzke is giving numbers to railroad games, and George Mann is giving numbers to Machiavelli games. Will it never stop? Numbers, in and of themselves, are totally useless. If these numbers aren't put to some useful purpose, then there's no point in having them. Unless of course this is being done as a joke, in which case I heartily support them!

polls

Glenn Overby (PO Box 36983, Grosse Pointe, MI 48236) has run a poll for Best Variant Zeen, Best Variant GM, Biggest Variant Personality, Best Variant. It's too late to vote now, as results are already out. Write to Glenn if you'd like to find out what they were.

Don't recall seeing any word on the Marco Poll, which usually takes place about this time.

cons

Dipcon/World Dipcon will take place June 22-24 in Chapel Hill, NC. Write to David Hood (15F Estes Park, Carrboro, NC 27510) for more information. Or any one of the *eight* publicity directors could tell you all you need to know. This con has more staff than some have attendees.

new zeens

Megalomaniac, by Rich McKey (20 Nonotuck St, Florence MA 01060) subs are \$7.50/10, game fees are \$2. Openings for three games of regular dip. This one has been around for a while now, I forgot to mention it last issue.

Perestroika Newsletter, by Larry Cronin (5855 N Kolb, #6207, Tucson, AZ 85715) subs and game openings are probably free. Perestroika variant only. Features lots of cartoons, while Larry learns

to type.

Massacre by Treachery, by Mark Larzelere (7607 Fontainebleau, #2352, New Carrollton, MD 20784-3820) has openings in Intimate Dip only. Game openings cost \$10 each, and include a subscription to the zeen for the length of the game.

old zeens

Linda Courtemanche's **High Inertia** has folded cleanly after a four-year career. Not many big-time subzeens left anymore—they've either gone big-time or folded. But **Operable** lives on!

It would appear that Alan Stewart's fold of **Praxis** was not as cleanly done as was originally assumed. Some former **Praxis** subbers have complained about their lack of refunds. I think writing directly to Stewart to complain is probably the best course, as it seems clear that his records are a mess. After all, he sent us a "refund" and we hadn't sent him any money to begin with.

For more info/discussion on Dipcon and World Dipcon, see recent issues of Cal White's (1 Turnberry Ave, Toronto, Ont M6N 1P6) **Northern Flame**.

For more info/discussion on PBEM vs PBM Dip, see recent issues of Tom Nash's (5512 Pilgrim Rd, Baltimore, MD 21214) **Been There, Done That** and Jeff McKee's (3801 W 13th, Wichita, KS 67203-4430) **The Metadiplomat**.

For more info/discussion on our Organization topic, see recent issues of Mark Berch's (11713 Stonington Pl, Silver Spring, MD 20902) **Diplomacy Digest**.

Last and least, **House of Lords** is folding again. Let it be known that I make this decision freely, and am in relatively sound mind and body. I feel no compulsion from darker forces, nor pressure from New Age Feuders as I make this decision. It's just time to fold. I think most of the discussions here have about run their course. Also, with Julie going to law school and me probably going back to grad school there will be precious little time for zeeny activities. Since I'm not ready to fold **Retal**, **Thorazeen**, **Politesse** or **Fast Trax**, **HoL** has to go. As of this issue, all trades to **HoL** are cut. I thank you all for trading with us up to this point, but probably will not be renewing my subs to most of your zeens (due to time constraints, primarily). I do plan to put out one more issue after this one, which will go out to regular subbers and free to the recent ex-traders. If there's sufficient interest in my doing so, of course. Those dozen of you who are due refunds will get them at that time. To those of you who've been promising "I'll write you a letter for **HoL** Real Soon Now" this is your last chance!

the concept

(KEVIN BROWN) I'm with Olsen, bring back Julie!!

(DAVE MCCRUMB) Loved *House of Lords*. I like your style of handling it better than Julie does.

(PAUL KENNY) Not For Print: Dick, tell Julie she can interject all the comments she wants—she ought to!

["Not for print"? Such a jolly joker!]

(TOM NASH) What ever happened to Mike Hopcroft?

[Not my day to watch him.]

(GERALD TODD) Jesus H Christ! What was that thing you sent me!? I thought, hey, Tom's keeping the *ZR* looking the same, but wait, this isn't the *ZR*, no it's *House of Lords*! Ok, that means someone saw the *Trib* somewhere. So, let's open it up and see what's inside. "My god, it's full of....," well, let's just say it ain't stars. Who are these people, why are half of them so pissed off? Why are the other half writing about the pissed off half? What's a Bruce Linsey, anyway?

I'm newer to this hobby than many, and newer still to pubbing, so I have no tales to tell, advice to give, claims to stake, scores to settle, people to blame, ya know, crap to sling. What I do have is interest, in wargaming, Diplomacy, playing, and putting out the *Trib*. Am I going to fit in? What do I care! Besides, unless I get a laser printer, step on some toes, or accept an office of some kind, chances are I won't even be noticed.

So as I page through *HoL* #21 and chuckle at the absurd little trifles that people get ulcers over, I am amazed to find several objects of interest! In fact, *HoL* is loaded with useful info, it's just stuck in between the hot air.

So, as a relative newcomer to Postal Diplomacy and the *House of Lords*, I have to say it's alright. If there's that much slinging going on, there might as well be a special place for it. In all honesty, Dick, I did enjoy it very much.

[Glad you like it. By the way, it's that derivative Peel who copied our look with the *ZR*, but we're not too greedy. It's there for the taking.... Some of our best stuff has come from the

newcomers who "don't know any better" so feel free to jump right in.]

(JOHN CARUSO) Ken Peel and Brad Wilson agree on something? I'm in shock.

Where have all the ~~children~~ humor writers gone? I'll tell you one thing—a lot of humor is based on real experiences with other people. Unfortunately, in this period of Dipdom people are afraid to make fun of fellow hobbyists and their experiences with these people for fear of starting a feud. Many a humorous pun has caused bad feelings and no doubt formed the foundation for greater arguments (aka feuds).

(MARC HANNA) I'd like to thank John Caruso for his remarks concerning my remarks which were possibly off the mark. I'd guess I'd have to agree that it's possible to get dragged into the quagmire, but so far that hasn't happened. Frankly, I fear not for the results I may suffer if I poke fun at feuders. This is only one hobby, after all.

Nevertheless, I would like to apologize to Kathy, who did bother to write to Berch after all. This (remarkable?) event was reported in a recent issue of *DD* by none other than (who else?) Berch himself.

Linda Courtemanche also deserves a "my regrets." I'll make a serious effort to be less serious in her subzeen that's folding. Frivolity is fun! Jellyfish is Jolly!

[Marc, your remarkable remarks are right on the mark.]

(TOM NASH) First of all, you've got to get a British Nelson off your mailing list. I really don't care which one, either will do. But this is getting entirely too confusing, trying to remember which one's letter one is reading at the current time, and I for one propose you do something about it!

On humor: Strange to see Brad bemoaning the lack of it in the hobby's zeens. As the last of the great feuders, he must take some of the responsibility for it. As David Hood (I think) said, it's hard to be funny when you have to worry about being attacked. When *BTDT* was a subzeen, I did a humorous column every month, entitled "The Dipdom Tattler," a fake "gossip sheet" on Dipdom and personalities involved. I personally thought it was quite funny. But what the old timers don't realize, because they were involved in situations where people were truly hurt, is that to most of us newcomers, feud material of the past, in retrospect,

really does look ridiculous. The overblown, self-righteous hyperbole on both sides is nothing if not comical to those of us who were not directly involved, and therefore still carrying a good deal of hurt and/or sensitivity.

If you're going to poke fun at the hobby, one must, as a good satirist, take feud-related material as target of your satire. It is the ultimate sacred cow of the hobby. And so I did. And I started receiving mail from well-meaning folk who considered themselves my friends, warning me, in no uncertain terms, to "watch out," that I was treading on dangerous turf, that I was about to ruffle feathers better left unruffled, etc. I ultimately dropped the Tattler, not because I took the warnings too seriously, but because I ran out material I thought was funny, and *BTDT* was getting too big anyway.

The point being that it's hard to be funny if you're looking over your shoulder. Fortunately, the climate in the hobby seems to have cooled off again a bit, and perhaps this will have an effect.

Jeff McKee is right, he *is* as qualified as anyone to talk about where all the funny people have gone, because he himself is hilarious. Unintentionally, however. As an example, his response to your USDA proposal and the titles involved: Prime, Choice, etc, indicating he missed the obvious joke and took it all seriously, was the funniest thing, by far, in that particular issue of *HoL*.

Which brings me to another point. In an atmosphere such as exists in our hobby, with far too many people taking themselves and issues far too seriously, many of the funniest things that see print are not supposed to be. To wit, I have read three things in the hobby in the past six months or so that were absolutely hilarious. Only one, David Perlmutter's "Salute to Fred Davis," was intended as humor. The others, Robert Sacks' explanation of his will, and Larry Peery's DipCon edition of *DW*, printing the damn menus fer cryin' out loud, were truly funnier in that they weren't intended as such!

PS - Who the hell is Fred Ieapo anyway?

[I know who Fred Ieapo is, you mean you don't? Well I ain't tellin'. Unfortunately, I hear he's resigned from his game, to be replaced by this guy named Nash....]

["The Dipdom Tattler" was very funny, yes. But similar columns have been done in the past that weren't quite so funny, and caused more harm than good. You did ok because nobody takes you seriously anyway (and I mean that in a good way). Dipdomites have always had a bad habit of taking themselves too seriously—but that's changed considerably since the Bad Boys blew through

town, and for the better. Really, how vital is it to have the definitive article on the play of Italy in 1901?

[Feud material is primo for satire. Unfortunately, when I try to satirize feud stuff it doesn't come out quite right—I come off as a vicious feuder. Julie's much better at it than I am (with *Operable* as the prime example, though it seems most people just don't get it). For example, the Canadians seem to think I've got it in for them, and that couldn't be much further from the truth.

[You mean you have a hard time telling Mark and James apart? I use one simple rule of thumb: if it makes sense to me, it's James.]

(TIM MOORE) Thought I might try a hand at this one...some of these are based on looks, others on attitudes. I've only met a few of these people, so I could be way off on some of them.

Don Williams...Harrison Ford
Melinda Holley...Debra Winger
Kathy Caruso...Sigourney Weaver
John Caruso...Peter Weller
Jim Diehl...John Lithgow
Pete Gaughan...Sean Connery
Tom Nash...Dan Ackroyd
Michael Hopcroft...Peter Falk
Vince Lutterbie...William Hurt
Linda Courtemanche...Ellen Barkin
Steve Courtemanche...Steve Guttenberg
David Hood...Kevin Costner
Jeff McKee...Jimmy Smits
Cathy Ozog...Debra Winger
Gary Behnen...Brian Dennehy
Robert Sacks...Bruce Willis
to be continued...

[Wait a second—who's playing "to be continued"?]

(MARK LEW) Topsy is a character in Uncle Tom's Cabin, I believe. As I recall, there are two little girls, Eva and Topsy. I never read UTC, but I remember a scene from it which is incorporated into The King and I.

I'm astounded to hear that you *still* keep all your correspondence. I did that way back when, but quit when it got out of hand. I remember I was still living at 3120 W 79th at the time, so it must have been 1984 at the latest. The only letters I keep now are the ones waiting to get into *bz's* letter column (too many, alas). I have a drawer in which I occasionally dump things which I think I might want to keep. Rummaging through there, I find six old letters, from Brad Wilson, Linda

Courtemanche, Ken Peel (from 1985!), Keith Sherwood, Bruce Geryk, and Julie Martin. The first three are fairly nondescript and I'm not sure why I kept them, so into the trash they go. The other three are a bit more memorable. Interestingly, the JM letter discusses KS; and both JM and KS discuss BG (and both JM and KS letters close with the "L" word.)

[Yep, I keep it all—in boxes scattered around the basement. If I *really* wanted to find something it's possible (given enough time). I'm just too lazy to throw it all away.]

bad boys

(MARK LEW) I too want to see a mature Bruce Geryk. Bruce is unusually witty, perceptive, and clever. Presumably a mature BG would figure out what he wants out of life and would use his talents to pursue it, instead of needing to boost himself by attacking others.

(KEVIN BROWN) The Bad Boys are apparently gone from everywhere now. Too Bad.

Oh, so Eric Brosius wants to feud, eh? He better watch out; I drove Bruce Geryk and Steve Clark out of the postal United hobby. Ghod only knows what I might do to him.

(PETE GAUGHAN) Take the parenthetical comments out of Olsen ("Bad Boys") and what is he really saying? "A guy's gotta eat Julie!" Bob, you ignorant slut!

[Pete, are you shooting for the 1989 François Cuerrier Award here?]

burnout

(PETE GAUGHAN) *News From Bree's* LotR game has been rehoused in *Hagalil Hamaarvi*—that would seem to be a fold, no?

If any of the following people publish again, I will *recommend* that my readers not subscribe (for a wide variety of reasons): Elmer, Uncle Connie, Uncle Bernie, and Bruce Geryk. (Breaks his heart, I'm sure.) Is that a "new topic"—Blacklisting? Maybe not, ok?

[No argument from me on that one. But I'd sub to a Geryk publication, you know it'll be interesting one way or another.]

(JOHN CARUSO) Truer words were never spoken. I'm referring to Steve Langley's comments (and yours too, Dick). When you start burning out as a player, you also burn out pubbing. My playing dip has peaked and valleyed twice each in twelve years. My recent valley period is ending, but I don't ever intend to go back into pubbing, if I can help it.

Bob Olsen is another good example of Steve's theory. When Bob only played, he was, as Kevin Brown states, a "prominent hobby" member. Then Bob turned to pubbing. Now Bob is an obscure peon, while Bob's protege, Don Williams, is a superstar. And rightfully so.

There are different types of burnout. Cal White only hit on one type: mixing interests. Phil Reynolds yet another: going overboard. In my case, the weight of numbers of years involved (twelve) has worn me out. Not over-involvement—it's just twelve years on one thing starts to get boring. To quote a Ken Peel pearl of wisdom, "If you're bored, do the backstroke."

There are a few others who have come and gone more than once in Dipdom. François "Free samples for \$1 each" Cuerrier, Elmer "I've never folded—only had one or two or twelve long delays of twelve months each" Hinton, Bob "I can do the backstroke, too" Olsen.

[I think I'm headed for one of those "weight of years" valleys, myself. At least postally speaking—the PBEM game is looking better all the time.]

census

(MARK LEW) I've found your census handy. I use it a lot more than I ever thought I would.

(DAVID HOOD) Any thoughts about doing a new census? My copy of the 1988 one is a mess, filled with COAs and additions. Also would be useful for Dipcon/World Dipcon publicity....

(MARK NELSON) Dick, an idea for your census, although I don't know if it's practical. What percentage of hobbyists who were in the census last time are in the current one; two times ago? Also what percentage of hobbyists who were in the census for the first time two censuses ago are in the current one? The idea behind this—yes, there is one—is to find out how long people remain active in dipdom before leaving for pastures new. I'd do the survey myself except I don't have a

complete set of your past census zeens.

[I don't think I have a complete set either, but if I did, I'd send them right off to you. Don't know if you could make a valid comparison though, as who's listed is often a function of which zeens I get lists for. For example, last year all the *Politesse* subbers were included (because Ken did some input, and I wasn't sure who to include and who not to), and this year they won't be. That's about forty people who won't show up in this census, not because they've "dropped out of dipdom" but because they were never in it in the first place.]

(PETE GAUGHAN) My address list is enclosed—how useful would a lot of old 3x5 cards be to you? I *don't* use my address file any more. Period. If an address change comes up in a game I'm playing in, I pick up the PDO Census and make a note of it—and I throw away the card! (I *do* maintain a file for *Perelandra* subscribers, with notes like spouse's and kids' names, birthdates, codename, etc. These cards, and those of ex-subbers, are green, of course.) However, I refuse to part with my copy of the Census long enough for you to pick up the changes. I'll have to think of something else. I *will* plug the Census in this week's *Perelandra*.

[Thanks. We're moving right along on this year's edition. Since the census is technically a list of Americans and Canadians subbing to dipzeens, the *Perelandra* sub list is the right thing to send along—not 3x5 cards!]

(JOHN CARUSO) I have a revolutionary idea: why not do the Census in erasable ink and every six to twelve weeks send out a census errata sheet for change of addresses, available to anyone for a dollar. Let the people change their own masters. Then you'd only have to do a master every two or three years. Errata could contain address changes, new hobbyists, and deletions of those who have left.

[I thought of that, but decided that doing it on 3-hole punched paper, with regular errata sheets to insert into your handy Census Binder would be more practical.]

computers

(JOHN CARUSO) My Electronic Mail system works like this: I write a letter with pen and paper.

I address an envelope, stamp it too. I go to my car. (Now here comes the electronic part.) I put the key in the ignition and start the car (hopefully). Drive to the mail box and deposit the letter.

I think Ken Peel has a great idea—instead of calling them IBMs, we can now call them John Caruso-compatible computers.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Why not name a computer? The PC I use at work is called "ORAC"—named after a different computer in *Blake's 7*... (Say, whatever happened to "The Bismarck"?)

[Sure, we name our computers at work, too. For instance, there's "The Mac SE down by Dana's office." Or "The NEC in the back room." We do name the Suns on the network, though, because they've got to have names (bullwinkle, underdog, batman, and popeye, so far). The Bismarck was lost at sea—I think Julie's brother ran it in a demo-derby. And won, too, no doubt.]

COSTS

(KEVIN BROWN) Trades? I must be really out of the mainstream. I haven't gotten a zeen sample in ages. In fact, *HoL* was the last one I got. I probably wouldn't trade for much anyway. What's wrong with subbing to a zeen you like, anyway? I think a lot of publishers try to use their zeens as some sort of "hobby currency" to get lots of zeens without spending lots of money. But if the zeens they get cost more than the zeens they produce, they're probably a burnout candidate anyway.

I think the most correct theory on costs was given by Dan Stafford in *Angst United*: the game fee/subscription is more to test the player/subber's commitment to the game/zeen than to cover costs.

[Well, you're in the mainstream of the United Hobby anyway. Any pubber who expects to trade zeens to "save money" is just kidding himself.

[I agree with the Stafford theory. Uncle Dan is a Very Wise Person. But Uncle Dan iz still a diz.]

(MARK LEW) Steve Dorneman is right that trades get out of hand for a publisher with an unrestricted trade policy. That happened to me, though I did it on purpose. I had lost touch with the hobby and I wanted to get back in it, so I started offering to trade with anyone interested. Sure enough, I soon had about twenty trades. Now I'm

cutting them all off, though I don't regret having started them. I still like to use a short-term trade to introduce myself to a zeen. One sample doesn't always give an accurate impression—I'd rather see (and send) three or four.

Willingness to trade has a lot to do with organization and attention to finances. I used to like trades because they were easier than keeping track of subs. Now that I'm not so disorganized, it doesn't make much difference. Besides, some changes in my real-world spending habits have made me more fussy about money lately. I find that almost all of my trades are money losers. That's likely to happen to any pubber who doesn't screen his trades carefully, because the pubbers whose zeens do cost me (for me, that's *Perelandra* and *Passchendaele*) know it and thus decide not to trade with you in the first place.

I think Wallace Nicoll is making a mistake by avoiding new zeens. Yes, it's true that most of them are skimpy and boring compared to the established and substantial zeens you've grown accustomed to, and it's true that a lot of them fold after only a few issues. But those that survive grow up to become the new established zeens, and the old ones eventually close up. More important, the players and contributors of the old zeens will cut down on their participation and fade away, while the enthusiastic new people are in the new zeens. After five or six years, a pubber who hasn't made an effort to keep in touch with the younger generations will start to feel like the hobby isn't as fun as it used to be, all the good people have dropped out and all the good zeens have folded, etc. He'll then turn into a grouch longing for the "Golden Days" of the Diplomacy hobby. I used to call this the Robert Bryan Lipton syndrome, after one prominent pubber who went through this just prior to my "Golden Days," but he's not the only one. Others of us have started to lose touch this way and have avoided it only by making a conscious effort to rejuvenate through new zeens. I know I have. I believe you have too.

Did François *really* send someone a bill for a sample zeen? Sounds like a hobby folk myth to me. But even if he did, so what? Why not just ignore it? Or do what I often do with real-world magazines when I don't like the sample: write "cancel" on the bill and send it back.

[I get a look at many of the new zeens, and usually offer to trade. Never know what may turn up. For every *News From Bree* or *Volcano City News* there's a *When The Lights Went Out* or *Been There, Done That*. I'm more out of touch

with older zeens than new ones.

[Actually, I could stand to do a little fading out, myself. Just burnout, I guess.]

(MARC HANNA) As far as the Cuerrier billing incident goes—who cares? The blame rests with the individual who sent in the money first and asked questions later, then went public over this trifle. Ho hum-a-drum-drum. By the way, where has Slappy's silly zeen run off to with my sub money?

[I think *NUTMGS* is merely a hobby folk myth. In this case, blame rests with the individual who sent in the money first and asked questions later, etc, etc....]

(TIM MOORE) What a beautiful place for Jeff McKee to start talking about the difference between ratings of PBEM and PBM. Therein lies the basic difference between the two *very separate* hobbies. With the PBM hobby, you sit down and write. Yes, there are some out there who use phone calls, but that is rare. 25¢ a pop, one to four days for it to get to its destination.

With PBEM, you've got a system set up to reward the big spenders, those that have enough time to sit online and gab with their allies and enemies. What about the poor guy who can barely afford connection costs and sends E-mail letter to everyone (about as close as you can get to just sending mail), who can't afford to converse about the game every night for 20 minutes? More times than not, he's eliminated because he didn't set up a rapport with the other players who could afford to stay on-line. Talk about irregular. I don't see that as being too fair to *all* the players.

And as for his contention that Jeff got his wins and draws the same way all the postal players did, I'd like to refute that with only an opinion. PBEM players are not on the same par as postal players. More like the minor leagues compared with the majors. Despite what the Peery/Del Grande (Let's make up the ratings as we go along) Scoring System gave as results at Dipcon, the computer players were some of the most inept players I have ever seen. As Mark Lew will tell you, when you have players who cannot even grab Tunis as Italy in 1901, you aren't playing with geniuses. The two exceptions to this fiasco were Steve Smith and Jeff McKee, both of who are involved in the postal hobby. I even saw other PBEMers going over and asking Jeff what they should be doing in their game (and this was not during the team tournament)! If they need help that badly, then maybe we could set

up an instructional league for them. And if they want to have their games rated with the "big boys," let them come out into the real Dip-world and play.

[Oh, I'm sure they were just asking Jeff what to do to boost his ego so he won't stab them in the games that count!

[I've seen little difference between the quality of play of snail mail and PBEM players. PBEM players seem less experienced though, and your "minor leagues" analogy is appropriate.

[I think you make a couple of incorrect assumptions here. First is that few postal players use the phone. I think phone usage is down from what it was a couple years ago, but is still significant in the postal world. PBEM players almost never use the phone. Why bother when the mail system is so fast? The other assumption is that PBEM play is done via online conferencing. Au contraire, Pierre, most is done with standard notes and messages. Connect time on CIS is running about 21¢ a minute these days, and you can send one good-sized letter or several shorter notes a minute. Of course, you have to pay to receive the mail, as well. So electronic play costs about the same per message as regular mail (excluding hardware—the average computer costs somewhat more than a pencil), on those systems that even charge for connect time. There just tend to be a lot more messages—I'm certainly a lot more inclined to write these short letter/postcard sized notes than humongous tomes.]

custodians

(MARC HANNA) The debate drones on. There seem to be three main points that certain individuals never seem to tire of discussing:

- 1) Should there be one custodian for variants?
- 2) Should numbers be assigned even if a GM doesn't want them?
- 3) Should Sax' Covenant be placed in an Ark, or next to the Constitution of the United States of America?

REX kindly replies:

- 1) No. Clearly the hobby demands more than one. Therefore, one is not sufficient.
- 2) Yes. Stuffy GMs may get stuffed.
- 3) Sax' Covenant is the most absurd thing I've heard of in this hobby in all my fledgling years. Your comparison, Dick, to the Constitution, comes in second. It only makes sense to be bound if, indeed, you want to be bound. If, for instance, the president of my company makes some policy that I

find I cannot abide, I can choose to leave. This principle also applies for the US, though I might be more inclined to stay and try to reverse the policy. If the next successor to Sax chooses to change policy or, in effect, rewrite the sacred covenant, that is that. Successors are not bound by previous covenants. Remember, my true anarchist, that we had some sort of covenant with the King of England before we decided to rebel and assume our own. Why do you not find yourself so bound? Because you've been trained, or you've chosen, not to be.

Personally, I care not for Sax' pontifications and insults for those who don't see it his way. The world has many marionettes, but I didn't expect to find such keen examples in Dipdom.

Sax' Covenant is of no binding merit at all (to those of us who count, anyway).

To: Sax

Fm: Rex

There is no *claim* that your silly Covenant does not bind me. There is only *fact*. The hobby wants no unity under the terms you would impose.

Seek ye your empire elsewhere.

[Perhaps you mean "martinets"? And I doubt you're referring to "small Martins." Or perhaps, this being dipdom, marionettes are exactly what you mean.]

(PAUL MILEWSKI) Please allow me to express my bewilderment over your comments on page 13 of *HoL* #21. The question of who, if anyone, is bound by the "covenant" cannot be answered by analogy to the "Constitution of the Great Big United States of America" unless we were talking about an association of variant players whose duly elected representatives drafted the covenant. Calling oneself a custodian does not bestow any special rights upon oneself. Being designated the successor custodian by the last person who called himself the custodian also has no particular effect. That is not to say that the services provided by the custodian to the hobby do not make the world a better place in which to live.

As to the question of a document binding people who don't sign, there is the usual confusion of the document with the contract. A contract may be proved by being in writing, but there are legal rules, called "standards of interpretation," which are applied to determine the meaning of what the parties have written. Where key terms are not defined, self-contradictory inconsistencies exist, or there is much extraneous verbiage, the document may not be sufficient. Why can't two people agree

to be bound to each other by a document neither of them signed? More to the point, why should anyone bother to be bound by anything so poorly written as the "covenant"?

[Reprinted from *The Metadiplomat* #7]

I take serious exception to the fifth paragraph of Jim Green's letter on page 16 of issue #5. His transparent allusion to the US Constitution is wholly inappropriate and misleading. There is no element of participatory democracy at work here. No duly elected representatives of those of us who together constitute the hobby met to draft a constitution, nor was any proposed constitution submitted to us for ratification. All the information of which I am aware can support only the conclusion that these custodianships, as they are called, have mutated from selfless individuals performing tedious recordkeeping services (which anyone was welcome to accept or refuse) to meddlesome individuals attempting to unilaterally impose their will uninvited.

As for the second paragraph of Mr Green's letter, there is a rulebook (or, more accurately, a choice of rulebooks) to assure that the game is played more or less the same everywhere. Registration for statistical purposes was the *raison d'être* for the custodianships, and ratings of players, which is what I take him to mean by "scoring," goes on by those who undertake the task using systems of their own concoction.

Why should anyone want to "prevent" a GM and seven consenting players from carrying on as they see fit? How do you envision "punishing" what you choose to characterize as "offending" GMs? Against who or what is the offense committed? The GM would first have to *agree* to be bound by the "rules and regulations." What we have now are custodians who stand upon a rock and shout something along the order of "Now the time has come for me to leave you. I have chosen one from among you to take my place. Heed his words as though they were mine." That is a fine speech if you happen to be an Old Testament prophet. I find it incongruous for one custodian to pass his hobby office, if it can be called that, to his successor in this manner.

In issue #75 of *Everything*, BNC Heinowski assigned Boardman numbers to five games then underway in Dick Martin's zeen and for which Dick had not requested Boardman numbers. Heinowski listed standbys as starting players in two of those games, in one game doing so for three of the seven positions. He also mistook a gunboat game for one to which a Boardman number should

be assigned. This is the confusion bred by meddling. It is regrettable.

[Your points regarding the Constitution seem to hinge on the legitimacy of the "duly elected representatives" who wrote the thing. Who elected these representatives? Women? Blacks? Indians? You'll find that much of the population "represented" by the guys were not party to the election, yet are still bound by the outcome. So what's the difference now between the tiny group electing representatives, or the electorate of one appointing a custodian?

[So I think it's obvious that the covenant could be binding, though whether that's a good thing or not is debatable. Is all this ultimately worth writing covenants about?]

(JOHN CARUSO) The player did not approach me. The player approached the BNC. The BNC approached me. I have no idea if the player or BNC approached Dick. I was asked if I could provide information on Dick's gamestarts since they weren't made available to the BNC. I did this. No, I didn't notify Dick. Maybe I should have. Maybe not. I see no big deal in providing the info. I see no big deal in getting numbers, period. If what I did and the way I did it offended you, I'm sorry. I apologize. I was just doing a job and helping the BNC fill in the blanks of his job. I had no idea if Dick was approached by either, but since I was approached, I correctly presumed Dick hadn't requested a number. Dipdom procedure has been for the GMs to request the number, not for the BNC to have to solicit the info.

Let's not get ridiculous here. Dick is not "out of Dipdom." The BNC never declared Dick so, and Dick's games aren't in disarray.

Ah, the Covenant. This albatross just won't go away. Let's sort through the drivel once again, piecing together Humpty Dumpty as we go along. Enclosed is a xerox of the original Covenant, signed by Sacks and Costikyan and witnessed by Heuer, for the transfer of the MNC from Sacks to Costikyan.

Sacks, to his credit, has steadfastly stood by the story that Leeder insisted he received the MNC from Walker, not Costikyan. Berch now brings up *LoH* #17 (Leeder's first) where he mentions that he, Leeder, received the MNC from Costikyan. I think proof is in order here, not just quotes. Is it possible Leeder said both, one to Sacks in a letter, the other on public record in print? Let's see!

Dick also asks what authority did Rod Walker have in this matter. *None!* Except that the MNC

(Costikyan) wasn't doing his job. I know that for a fact, because from approximately September 1979 through late Spring 1980, I asked for at least two Miller Numbers myself for games I was running and never received anything from Costikyan. Not a number, not a letter explaining why. Not even a postcard. Walker stepped in on his own and tried to get the ball rolling. Walker may have had no authority and might have been wrong for stepping in, but he did get the MNC passed to someone who did function marginally and temporarily: John Leeder.

Robert Sacks did give money to both John Leeder and John's appointed successor, Lee Kendter, Sr.

Did Walker and Costikyan reach any agreements? On whose word did Leeder print that they did? Are these agreements binding if actually occurring? I say only Costikyan can clear that up. If word of these agreements comes from Walker via ARDA as Mark Nelson claims, it has to be taken with a grain of salt.

For a minute, assume that the Covenant is binding on the MNC and future MNCs even if unsigned. The DVC was never reconstituted. Is there anything that Leeder did that violates the Covenant? Is there anything that Kendter did that violates the Covenant? How did Leeder or Kendter usurp the post if Leeder was appointed by Costikyan and Kendter by Leeder? All opinions are welcome!

[*Everything* #75, BNC Steve Heinowski: "Mr Martin has chosen, for reasons of his own, not to participate in that section of the hobby of which Boardman Numbers are a part....Perhaps when I step down Mr Martin will find my successor more 'suitable' and will once again participate in the hobby." If he's not saying that The Hobby is defined as those willing to get Boardman Numbers (and since I'm not, I'm out), what is he saying?

[No, I'm not offended by players or anyone else getting whatever numbers they like for the games I run. Not so long as they expect me to ignore the existence of these numbers, anyway.]

(ROBERT SACKS) Peel obviously forgets the agreements he initiated between *ZR* and *KGO*. This perhaps explains why Nash does not respond to inquiries whether the agreements continue in force.

Hopcroft assumes that I saw Carrier's crap on a timely basis (I was travelling in May) and thought ill enough of him to believe on initial reading that he would fall for Carrier's fraud. Incidentally, I sent Hopcroft a check for \$2 (return of \$12 SB

gamefee less \$10 *KGO*'ZD expenses advanced and not accounted for) which I would appreciate he cash so that my checkbook would balance.

During my tenure as MNC, a good deal of constitutional practice was codified and a number of agreements made. However, it was impossible to get a "Constitution for Variants" or a new designator system agreed to because the Variant Backs, then as now, would not agree to anything that did not give them total control. Therefore, when I left office all the constitutional practices and agreements binding on the office were written down as the Covenant. The Covenant contained *no* new provision. Breach of the Covenant is therefore breach of the pre-existing constitutional practice or agreement.

Assigning a number to a game implies that the GM or publisher has requested a number and therefore recognizes the right to assign the number. If this is not the case, by publishing an involuntary assignment (without noting it as such) an act of fraud or misrepresentation is committed.

I apologize for any misrepresentation I gave Del Grande, but I don't remember the incident. Unless it took place before Kendter (Sr) broke off negotiations and before Charlie started assigning MNs, it is totally inexplicable.

A rough sequence of events:

Walker denied a variant award—vows to break Covenant & DVC.

Costikyan refuses to sign Walker's agreement because it would give control of the office of MNC to the variant banks.

Walker attempts to usurp the office twice & is twice publicly repudiated.

Costikyan, reestablished as MNC, hands over to Leeder. Costikyan ships materials which Leeder later claims not to have received. Sacks ships documents including Treasury check. Walker apparently also ships materials from the times he tried to usurp the office.

Leeder then announces agreement with Walker.

Sacks decides there is no way to contest this, so informs Leeder & Heuer. Heuer, Director of Orphan Games & AMNC, & witness to the Covenant, invokes covenant & demands it be enforced.

Leeder argues that the Covenant has not been broken by the agreement with Walker, and says to judge by actions, not words.

Months pass. Caruso & Byrne complain that Leeder is not assigning numbers, demands that Sacks take appropriate action.

Sacks writes Leeder. Under Covenant, Leeder could be removed for not assigning number. Leeder

denies being bound by Covenant. Sacks points out that he was appointed by Costikyan who was MNC under the Covenant and was named as Vice Custodian in it. Leeder denies being bound by the Covenant, claiming to be Walker's successor and not Costikyan's.

Sacks apologizes for mistakenly believing he was dealing with the MNC under the Covenant, requests return of all property belonging to MNC under the Covenant (none comes), and starts a public search for a new MNC.

(The NYGB insisted that the title "MNC under the Covenant" not be surrendered; NAVB insisted that the title "MNC" not be surrendered.)

Kendter (Sr) agrees to serve as "MNC under the Covenant" if there are no objections. Berch refuses to let the matter be scheduled for the Dipcon meeting—says he objects to Kendter so serving. Kendter then accepts other custodianship from Leeder.

Pressure placed on NYGB to deal with Kendter. Compromise reached: Kendter to be recognized as Acting MNC and funded while a new Covenant written; Registry of Projects set up from parts of the AMNC Registrar of Projects, Know Game Openings, and Orphan Games (then one office) & the juridical authority of DVC (thereby abandoned).

Discussions on written Charter for the Registry and new Covenant postponed due to Linsey-Berch attacks on BNC (Byrne). BNC verbally registers, and hearings begin. Linsey & Berch refuse to cooperate with any hearing.

When Byrne resigns in disgust, Kendter asks for finalization of status. He then disagrees with almost every clause in Covenant. Final offer made by Sacks: sacrifice everything except ancient no fee guarantee. Kendter agrees with weasel wording Sacks did not notice. Sacks writes up agreement & Covenant without weasel wording. Kendter breaks off discussions (thereby breaking previous agreement). Sacks discovers weasel wording, decides situation hopeless, resolves to restore office himself when "Karel Alaric" volunteers instead. Sacks gives final deadline to Kendter, is ignored, turns over everything to "Karel Alaric," newly registered MNC under the (new) Covenant. NYGB offered chance to act, redistributes half of the monies held by it for the MNC under the Covenant to other hobby officers.

Kendter names Hyatt as successor.

"Karel Alaric" decides to step down. Hyatt offered position of MNC under the Covenant to end the schism, ignores offer. Julie Martin volunteers and is appointed MNC/uC.

Hyatt names Grigsby as successor.

[And they all lived happily ever after.

[What "Peel agreements" are you referring to?]

(MARK BERCH) With regard to the transfer of the MNCship from Costikyan to Leeder, I'll try to answer your questions. The document that only Costikyan and Sacks signed binds no one else—it doesn't even mention anyone else. You mention the US constitution as binding those who don't sign. But the only people who are obligated to "uphold and defend" the Constitution are those who swear to it—the President, congressmen, judges, etc. The rest of us have no obligations under the Constitution, though of course we have to obey various laws written by the state, etc. So I don't think this a good analogy.

You write, "As Robert Sacks seems to be the one with first-hand knowledge of Costikyan's intentions, it seems reasonable to take his interpretation (and the actual covenant) at face value." I disagree. Only Costikyan has first hand knowledge of his intentions. And if, as Leeder says, Leeder was told by Sacks that he agreed to change the numbering system, then Leeder would have first-hand knowledge of Greg's *actions*. At any rate, Walker and Leeder both said that Costikyan agreed in principle to change the numbering system, Sacks said he didn't so agree, Costikyan says he can't remember (I asked him recently), so I consider the entire issue a dead end.

For some of your other questions, it's a little hard to take them seriously. "Who said Costikyan quit?" For heaven sakes, Costikyan mails the MNC records to Leeder (this happened once the Canadian postal strike ended), so I think it's safe to assume from that that he quit. As a practical matter, that's what passing on the job consists of—sending off the records. Similarly, "Why must we rely on Rod's reporting of what happened?" But as I said, *Lord of Hosts #17* was put out by John Leeder. If you don't want to take Rod's word or reporting, you can just go with what Leeder says. I don't know of any significant conflict between the two accounts.

[Costikyan shipped the records? My understanding is that Leeder claimed never to have received the records, thus casting doubt on whether they were ever sent in the first place. Certainly *something* happened, but I certainly can't tell what it was. And Leeder originally claimed to have taken over from Uncle Rod, not Costikyan, didn't he? What a confusing mess.

[Your sentence "And if, as Leeder says..." makes absolutely no sense at all.

[How about all of you giving up on this ancient history of the MNC for my going away present?]

(KEVIN BROWN) Keep track of all the United leagues? All five? Do you realize how much time and effort the poor soul elected to this office would have to endure to keep up with it all? No human deserves such a fate, and I'm sure no one in their right mind would consent to taking such a position. Seriously, I don't believe there are enough United leagues to make United Numbers necessary. If there were only five postal Dip games going in America, would we need a BNC? Unless you just want to give numbers for numbers' sake, just so somebody could feel a bit self-important as United Number Custodian, Lawfully Entitled (UNCLE).

If you're not opposed to the BNC/MNC/MNCUC giving out numbers indiscriminately to all games with the sole intent of rating the games, then why are you opposed to polls doing the same thing for zeens? Heck, pollsters don't even really give numbers. What does it hurt to have your zeen rated in a poll? People aren't going to drop out just because you did poorly. If they wanted out, they'd be out already. Besides, if you did well, you might get some new blood. You have potential gain (new subbers) with no potential loss. Heck, if Julie can put MNs on my games without my permission, I can very well include your zeen in a poll without yours.

Hey, anybody want a Miller Number? Send me your zeen running variants and I'll give you one. I won't keep records, rehouse if you orphan them, call them irregular, or even require that you send me an endgame summary. I just want to hold an office: MNCWBOC (Miller Number Custodian Without Benefit of Covenant). Let's see Eric Brosius cut that down to three letters. I won't even charge for my MNs. I won't even use NAVB numbers. I might even sign a covenant with Sacks if I'm not required to actually do anything but hand out numbers. But I won't give numbers to United leagues, no matter what.

Doesn't it say in the Bible somewhere that Noah had two MNCs on the ark with him?

[Yeah, they were in the bunk just above the unicorns. No wonder unicorns are extinct.

[Well, polls aren't like numbers, in that they are a qualitative measure and numbers are strictly quantitative. A better comparison would be

between the numbers and the zeen registers. Polls are too subject to manipulation and misinterpretation.

[When was the last time you sent off for a sample of a zeen that finished poorly in a poll? I'd rather sink or swim on the merits of the zeen, and how it suits each particular subber. I don't want subbers who sign up strictly because whatever zeen is "number three in the latest poll."]

(JULIE MARTIN) This is for the people who have been asking where *Lord of Hosts* is. Thank you for your interest. I will be putting out an issue this January, thus fulfilling my one-issue-per-year requirement and making *LoH* ineligible for The Poll. I resent its low finish in The Poll last year, below *Alpha & Omega*, particularly because Ran Ben-Israel used information from *LoH* without permission and uncredited to prepare *A&O*. My zeen is clearly the better product and was obviously voted lower for strictly political reasons. I say again that I despise polls for precisely this reason: they promote competition between zeens. I would have been perfectly happy to have gone along publishing *LoH* as before, enjoying the compliments of the people who really did read the zeen. The Poll ruined this pleasure for me.

I also resent being represented as an MNC who is merely a puppet of Robert Sacks, when it is much more the case that Ran Ben-Israel is the MNC puppet of Fred Davis. Ran phoned me recently to apologize for having used material from *LoH* in his *A&O* without permission and uncredited. He said the material had been sent to him by an unnamed person, and he hadn't realized the source. He wanted to know if we could "still be friends." Ran, we can be friends, as soon as you tell Fred Davis to quit subverting my work to promote yours, and you start doing your own legwork. I don't have information handed to me on a platter, ready to be cut and pasted into my zeen; I have to dig it up. Using someone else's research and presenting it as your own is called plagiarism, and it is unbecoming one who claims to be the "real" MNC.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Excuse me—is the offering of MNCuc to the MNC "to end the schism and restore unity" Robert Sacks' idea of "the Covenant side has made every attempt at unity"? That's like Hitler calling Churchill in 1939 and saying, "Look, let's end this schism and promote unity—all you have to do is accept the title of Chancellor of Great Britain under the Third Reich."

An idea concerning games whose GMs don't

want to have BNs: simply list them in *Everything* as if the game had a number, only state that "this game has no BN," and if some wise guy wants to assign it a "leftover" number at the end of the year, that's his business.

(GEORGE MANN) Your explanation of why Machiavelli falls under MNCUC was what I was looking for. I still don't think it's right, but it's logical. Enough said.

dipcon

(DON DEL GRANDE) Re World Dipcon II: The voters were given a choice—either any one of a number of cons that would have Dip sharing the spotlight and force the attendees to shell out big bucks for hotel rooms, or in Chapel Hill as the main event at a place that had cheap housing. The definite consensus was for the latter. (I voted for ORIGINS, mainly because it had the potential for holding the largest tournament. At least if WDC II is held the week before ORIGINS, I can attend both.)

There's one problem with trying to draw up a WDC charter: who's authorized in this hobby to sign it? (Peery? Sacks? A ratification of the Dipcon meeting?) And speaking of WDC, even if Larry would have announced in advance that he wasn't submitting a San Diego bid, I was worried that a group of San Diego State University types (or just Southern California dippers in general) would submit their own bid and flood the meeting with votes for a "local" WDC.

[And that would have been "all right" as they'd have stolen it fair and square. Larry was just too capable of rigging the whole process. If he had no intention of making a bid, then it would have been best for him to have said so.]

(JOHN CARUSO) World Dipcon: the whole process is vulnerable, mainly because there is no charter. It's vulnerable to rigging or outright stealing. Just look at Mark Nelson's letter—Brits already have World Dipcon slated for the UK, completely ignoring mainland Europe, where I hear there is a growing movement to host World Dipcon 1994. For my money, I'd rather go to beautiful mainland Europe—the Lowlands, France, or Germany, where the people are friendly, the food, wine, and beer excellent, the countryside pretty and sites galore. Not that Brits aren't friendly. They are, but who wants to visit a crime-infested,

bombed-out village, or step on a leftover V-1 rocket?

I still feel WDC in America should be selected independently from Dipcon, and not by any one group of people from one clique or area. If it wasn't for cost, NY would be the perfect choice. It's accessible, it has plenty of sites to see—bombed-out buildings for the Brits, pretty countryside for the Mainlanders, the Long Island Expressway for Canadians, and Liberty Island for Columbians. We even have prehistoric caverns in NY harbor. Take a Brit on a ferry ride, tie an anchor to his back, and throw him overboard so he can see the rare, million year old bones. For the Olsen/Michalski types, there are the Staten Island bunkers, built during WWII to act as a command/control center in case NY was invaded. Don't ask me by who—maybe they expected the Finns to invade. That was our Maginot Line of NY. Tell me the US government doesn't know how to waste money. Even forty-nine years ago, they could piss it away.

Of course Peery's World Dipcon letterhead was absurd. Or was it another trial balloon?

finding new subbers

(DON DEL GRANDE) I doubt that the "Opponents Wanted" column in *The General* is for subscribers only—if this is the policy, then why do the forms appear in issues that are sold in stores?

[Would you believe...because it's easier to make one issue for everybody than one issue for subbers and a different issue for store sales?]

(JOHN CARUSO) Tell Eric Brosius to write to *Known Game Openings* and *Pontevendria* (if it's still active) and send an SASE. They *should* have listings of any sports games with openings.

(KEVIN BROWN) Anyone wanting a full list of American United leagues can write to me, and I'll get it to them post-haste (not that the post is very hasty). As far as sports zeens go, I know about those baseball things where you draft teams and cost megabucks for professional service, but I'm not up on other sports zeens (except United, of course).

(TOM NASH) In the very short time that I have been distributing the North American Zeen Bank, I have become convinced that for the pubber who wants new players/subbers, one of the most

effective ways of accomplishing this is to send me some extra copies to distribute. Several pubbers, Phil Reynolds, Garrett Schenck, Bruce McIntyre, Fred Davis, Lee Kendter (Jr), McKey (not to be confused with McKee), overseas pubbers like Branon Whyte in New Zealand and Pete Sullivan in the UK and even the 1830 Satan yourself, as well as others I can't recall at this precise instant, routinely send me a bunch of extras, or at least have sent a big bundle on occasion. What this does is insure that a copy of the zeen goes into every zeen bank sample I send out (and I average about three a month). Both Reynolds and Schenck have already mentioned to me in correspondence that they have picked up new subbers this way. Others, like McKee, Swider, Severe, etc., have taken advantage of my "two copies of yours for both the **ZR** and **BTD**" trade offer. Again, giving an extra copy to go out. To be perfectly clear: if I am paying for your zeen, by sub, because you refuse to trade, and it's one I like, or am playing in, and I get just the one copy folks, I am probably saving it for myself, so it doesn't go out!

The person who requests a sample is *eager* to see zeens. Why, because they're a collector? No, obviously, they're actively looking to sub and/or play. I remember getting my zeen bank sample from the Pesky One. Man, it was exciting! I couldn't believe there were that many zeens out there, all different, and some really looked good. I dropped a small fortune in sub money and game fees over the next week. Stayed up real late one night poring over them with the **ZR** as a reference and just wrote check after check, and addressed a ton of envelopes.

That's one of the reasons why people who won't trade with the **ZR** because they are quite concerned about the finances of their zeen and cutting trades or have an explicit no trade policy, slay me. Not because I think it is the *obligation* of every pubber to support this fine hobby project and failure to do so is moral turpitude in action. Hell, no. But don't be bitchin' in your zeen about no new subbers or how you have to raise your price and cut more trades because of your small subber base, and then refuse the best way to get new subbers! (Or, actually, go ahead and do it, I don't care, just don't expect me to feel bad.) And don't expect me to send out the copy of your zeen I pay for myself when you won't trade. I'm gonna spend a fortune as it is on the **ZR**, which I don't really mind, since I am getting enjoyment out of doing it, so I really don't want to hear any more complaints about "hoarding" zeens that I've paid out of pocket for. Nor about inaccurate info on zeens that won't trade

that I don't want to sub to. I'm going far enough, IMHO, to offer a trade to *any* zeen. But don't bitch if you turn me down and I don't want to spend money on a product I have no desire to get so your info is accurate.

Actually, that was a lot crankier than it needed to be. I haven't gotten too many complaints on any of that yet... it's just the ones I have gotten bugged me, and I needed to get it off my chest.

gming procedure

(PAUL KENNY) I attended the Jim Burgess School of Press Diplomacy. Press is fun. I am running two games in *Standard Deviation* (see *CIA*). One is a grey press game and one is a black press game. The black press game is a lot of fun, and it seems everyone gets into the mood to write press. Since you can use your opponents byline, you can instigate feuds between players, if the players believe the printed lie. The press gets amusing and keeps me, the GM, wanting to do the game reports when other pressures (like school) interfere.

(MARK LEW) I'd like to point out that I'm doing my part to promote the quality of play in Dipdom. In spite of occasional temptation, I have refrained from joining any regular dip games for the last five years.

Yeah, I remember Jack Masters' *Black Frog* NMR policy, but I don't recall ever seeing it used. I got wiped out early in my one *BF* game, and shortly thereafter I got in a feud with Jack and he cut my sub. I also remember *Black Frog's* subscription rate: "Just send whatever you think the zeen is worth." Boy, I sure hated that. It's not my responsibility to assess the zeen's value. If he wants to set a price, he should say so. If it's up to me, I want to get a zeen cheap. But you couldn't be too cheap, or else Jack would get pissed off (after all, by sending not very much money you are supposedly saying that you think the zeen isn't worth very much). So the whole thing became a game of trying to guess how much money you had to send to avoid offending Jack. I felt like I was being extorted.

[We had the same problem in the early days of *Politesse*. Ed Wrobel just set the sub rate at "whatever you think is right"—so some people sent in too much and some sent in too little. Better to just set a rate, any rate. Even free is better.

[The computer did do moves once or twice. I

can't recall being particularly impressed by the machine's tactical ability.]

(TOM NASH) The quality of play you and Jeff mention is down. As you say, you're lucky if you get three good players. And then the standbys come in and wreak havoc. That's why I've mostly tried to organize games on CIS that will have a higher quality of play... the Winners' Game, and the newly organized PBEM Demo Game for *DW*. Yeah, it's harder to do as well, but jeez, what a difference. The CIS Winners' Game is in 1908, I believe, and there has yet to be an NMR. And it has been a tough, highly negotiated, very intense game all the way. I like that.

[I've been impressed with the quality of play in some of the gunboat games on CIS, but the regular games have been, well, regular. I'd hate to see a trend toward more "invitational" games in general. All the good players would get scarfed up, and none would be left for the rest of us.]

(PETE GAUGHAN) Standbys—I call 'em based on how many of my games they're already in and how busy they are (personal and Dipdom life both considered).

Eric B probably had me in mind with his "panic date"—I went through a summer this year when I was so tired in the evening that I didn't *care* whether the zeen got done.

(GEORGE MANN) Andy Lischett's comments on picking standbys was timely. I never thought about it since I luckily haven't had to call a standby since I started running my games. Personally, I don't have a problem with picking a standby based on neighboring players or any other factor I see fit. However, so as not to upset my players, I'll stick with the random method. As for guest GMs, I'm looking to go that way. If my subbers want more games but I can't handle the load, then a guest GM is the best solution I see. Of course, I'll be selective in who I choose.

[Be very careful when deciding on a guest GM. Most important, try to agree on all the important stuff before making the commitment: who sends out the report, when the report is due, what happens when either of you is late, what rules you'll be using, etc. Leave no understandings unstated!]

(DON DEL GRANDE) I remember the old PBM Dip tournament—wasn't the major complaint that there was a "no standby" policy, and the

tournament took so long that many of the later-round games were loaded with CDs?

I might as well mention the one problem we had with guest GMing. I think you had a policy of waiting one or two days after the deadline when not everyone had sent in orders, but when you combine that with the time it takes to send the results across the country, it became very hard to allow four weeks for negotiations and still get the results into a zeen that is published on a very firm five-week schedule.

Now for the shock—I'm seriously considering opening another game of Trivial Pursuit using the "1980s" set. Have you noticed two things about it? First, the category abbreviations on the card are the Genus categories, and second, there are no answers in italics. (Titles appear in a very slightly different typeface, but it's not in italics.)

[Certainly the high number of CDs was a major failing of the first tournament—but it wasn't necessarily late in the games. Being placed next to the one or two players who'd never send in moves or dropped after 01 was a critical advantage. The postal tournament also suffered from a bad case of chaos.

[I've got this bad habit of waiting for moves instead of just firing off a report with NMRs. That's fine for *Retal* or *Thorazeen*, but not so good with a more strict zeen like *LOM*. Sometimes the moves come, sometimes they don't. Which is better: to NMR the latecomers and get a standby in there (who may or may not be any more timely), or to try to get moves from everybody?]

(JOHN CARUSO) You mean I can get \$20 a turn for GMing "Monstrosity"? And to think, when I run my WWII game, I only get \$1 a turn. I provide prompt results (one month deadlines), turn sheets, and result sheets. Maybe I should become a professional GM.

[You've got that professional mindset already. Now all you have to do is apply for membership in the Gamesmasters Publishers Association.]

in dipdom

(RICH MCKEY) Here might be an interesting new topic for *HoL* (If it hasn't already been flogged to death—"He's a sadistic, sodomistic masochist; but that's just beating a dead horse."—from *What's Up, Tiger Lily?*): I am currently playing in three games (not counting SB

positions) in three different zeens. All of the games were delayed in the pre-Spring 1901 "turn," two of them had separated W01/S02 turns, and one of the zeens is currently five weeks overdue. In at least one of these games, I will doubtless be stabbed, and I most likely will not do very well in, let's say, two out of the three. So what do I find so compelling about such an unwieldy game which is often abusive to the old self-esteem? Don't get me wrong, I believe that Diplomacy is a great game, to my mind every bit as good a game as chess. I think it is a good enough game to last as long as chess. Of course, chess can also be an unwieldy game to play and is equally as abusive to the ego. But I digress.

I got into PBM Dip because I loved the game and couldn't round up enough interested parties to ever play. (I've only played in two FTF games in my life!) I would venture a guess that that is how most pbm folks started. But what *keeps* PBmers in the hobby?

In my case (not that I've been with "the hobby" for that long, but I GMed and played in a number of games before "joining the hobby"), I think I enjoy testing my persuasive writing in specific, and powers in general. (They're pretty poor.) For me, winning and drawing are such sweet rewards, and losing *such* a bummer, that the challenge of the game is truly terrible, but sooo worth it.

I really enjoy reading the various literatures of the hobby, be it the game press, lettercols, or articles, or the rules, lists, or blurbs. And I really think all this seemingly inconsequential writing is good for me in a couple of ways: 1) I am forced to realize that I am not quite the cracker-jack writer that I thought I was, and 2) I write more, and better, in an attempt to keep par with some of you folks.

(DON DEL GRANDE) Here's one for the new topic—what's my most memorable experience in Dipdom? Well, I don't have "one" that sticks out over all of the others, but the one that comes to mind first is Marycon 84. Having just graduated from college two weeks prior, and having a choice between Marycon (followed by a trip to DC and New York) and Dallas ORIGINS, I decided once and for all to see just what these "East Coast Cliques" looked like in person. On top of all that, I got my first two draws in Dip (including a three-way with Lee Kendter, Sr when it was obvious that he wanted me to stab the third player so that he could stab me in turn for the win)—and that includes every game I ever played up to that point, although that wasn't very many.

Well, there's also the time I first met John

Boardman—and introduced myself *after* listening to one of his diatribes about something like "how Californians should be separated from the rest of the country." (Never mind that he's right—we're beginning to take over!)

(PETE GAUGHAN) Most Memorable?

Everybody's probably going to have a tough time with that—so much so that I'll bet you see twenty entries! Getting eliminated as France in 1902 (*my* first game, a postal one)? The entire "Camelot" era of *Magus*, when Steve and Daf ruled a realm where Don and I were princes? The Dipcon from Purgatory (Dallas '84 when I ran it because no committee member showed up)?

Well, I guess those would constitute "Most Memorable" game, zeen, and con—except it leaves out Seattle '85, aka *Magus* does Dipcon; and Arlingcon 3, when we made Cathy's first Dip experience unique by bringing together Daf, Olsen, Rusnak, and the Zarse Factor. That Arlingcon would probably have to be my choice. I don't know what I'd be doing today if Cathy hadn't enjoyed that party and the people so much.

(JOHN CARUSO) Memorable moments in Dipdom: I have two. It's funny how great minds think alike. No, not me and Bob Olsen either. The first major gaming con Kathy and I went to in Chester, PA in 1980. Meeting all of the faces behind the words—Dick Martin, Bob Arnett, John Boardman, Lee Kendter, and being introduced to the infamous Robert Sacks. That also happens to be the same con that Dick likes my review of.

My other moment was my first dip game in *Terran*. It ended up a three-way draw. I was Austria—welcome to Dipdom. Austria in my first game. I can even remember the starting players.

(MARK NELSON) My most memorable experience in dipdom was those editors who answered my eager questions many years ago when I was a novice. Too many editors can't be bothered with novices, but I was lucky and my first contacts were with people who encouraged me. Other than that, my favorite part of dipdom is meeting people at cons.

~~By the way, I was probably too harsh on Wallace not knowing who Don Turnbull was. He only started the first ever UK Dip zeen, but who cares really? It's the people which make dipdom fun, not the games.~~

(TIM MOORE) Haven't been here long enough to reminisce with all you hobby old farts,

but the things that has made me smile the most was my first standby call. It means you are legit enough as a player to be called into a position that more often times than not needs to be salvaged. Now that, my friends, is an honor.

(TOM NASH) Like you, my first game was the most memorable. A PBEM game on Compuserve (rated, like all CIS games, in the only hobby wide ratings I'm aware of being done—Smythe's Calhamer Point Count— so cool off Jeff) organized originally in the CIS PCjr forum (yes, I admit it, I owned one once.... the shame!) and then moved to *TAD*. I drew France and everything I tried worked. A rule book victory in 1907. Never having played any kind of Dip before, I thought.... well this is an easy game.... it's been all downhill since then!

(ANDY LISCHETT) I can't think of any one shining highlight to my involvement in the Diplomacy hobby, but I can think of a few semi-gloss events.

My favorite game as a GM was Tricky-Woo. I was the GM, but Paul Rauterberg (Russia) *really* ran the game. This game featured run-of-the-mill lies and stabs, as well as forgeries, impersonations, intimidation, and other fun stuff. Tricky-Woo also had the most imaginative press I've seen (especially from John Shea (a short-time Diplomacy player)), and I don't like press.

As a player, my favorite game was '79HZ. The game began in *The Beholder* as an invitational game, and Rod Walker was asked to do commentaries. As Germany, my S'01 moves were a full-scale invasion of Russia (my favorite German opening, but don't tell anyone), and Rod's analysis tore my moves apart, ending with the phrase, "My analysis: scratch Germany." I won the game in 1919.

The first person I met through Diplomacy was my first GM, who was listed on a flyer included with the game in 1976. He lived in the same town as I did, and was a jerk. Not yet realizing his jerkiness, I decided one Saturday to deliver my orders in person and say hello. I drove to his home and knocked on the door, and a young woman opened it about six inches on a safety chain and said, "Yeah?" I said, "Hi. I'm in one of Chris's Diplomacy games, and I've got some orders for him." She turned from the door and hollered, "It's some game crap," and disappeared. Soon my GM appeared in the six-inch gap and said, "Yeah?" I said, "Hi. I'm Andy Lischett." (Pause. Silence. Blank stare.) "I have some orders for 1976X." He grabbed the envelope I'd held up, said "Okay," and

shut the door.

But I've met more nice people than jerks including you and Julie and a cast of dozens. One summer ('78?) François Cuerrier called from Canada and asked me if he could visit me in Chicago for a weekend, and then stayed for a week. All he wanted to do was drive through American slums. Between slums, he tried teaching me the hex game *Fortress Europa*, but kept vetoing my successful German moves because they were historically inaccurate and *shouldn't* succeed. Eric Ozog dubbed François the Mountain Man, and François' visit earned me a lifetime subscription to *Passchendaele* (which is on its third lifetime).

I'm glad you like *Cheesecake* #14. I can't think of any outstanding issue or feature of a particular zeen, but the most enjoyable zeen I received regularly was *The Inner Light*.

[I'd have to agree with you on *The Inner Light*. It's the zeen most mentioned as memorable, along with *Brutus Bulletin*.

[We'll assume that you're including us (along with that cast of dozens) in the "nice people" group, and not with the "jerks!"]

lettercolumns

(PETE GAUGHAN) I'm ready to start printing a lot more letters if that's what my readers want—but over and over I hear "more literature and more diverse games" so I'm trying to get good at those first.

(GEORGE MANN) I took a poll, and subbers wanted more letters in my zeen. Well *SOF* #11 is coming out in a few days with three or four pages of letters. Let me tell you, it's a bitch to type up a letter column. It took me at least four to six hours. I'll continue with it as much as possible, but it is a drag. I admire what you do in *HoL*. Oh yes, the letters were only about wrestling (David Orne's favorite sport).

[Typing up anything is a pain in the neck. Fortunately, most of the longer submissions are typed legibly, and that makes life much easier. As the primary banner-carrier of the great wrestling faction of dipdom, it's your duty and honor to publish as many wrestling letters as you can. I appreciate it, that's for sure—means not many folks write to me about the latest antics of Rowdy Roddy Piper!]

organizations

(PETE GAUGHAN) (I'll say it this month—it deserves repeating.) Organize this hobby? Get real!!!

[Pete, Pete, Pete...do I look serious? Dust off your imagination, boy!]

(JOHN CARUSO) I have a Statement of Purpose for Stephen Dorneman. How about to put some semblance of consistency into what is now an anarchy of chaotic and sometimes absurd actions. Nothing too bureaucratic, small amount of dues (to offset costs and have a little extra for emergencies or services in dire need), a membership card with ID number, having *all* of a member's dip games rated. Things like that. A magazine could be published, but supplied only to paying subbers. The organization's purpose wouldn't be to dictate to Dipcon or police Dipdom, but it should try to create some kind of coherent, unified appearance in the service and promote harmony. Sort of like a serious PDO with a \$1 or \$2 membership fee. Might also consider offering one-year subs or a free game start to newcomers for their money. Discounted sub rates to member.

So what do you think? I thought so—it would never fly. It's too idealistic. Too pro-hobby and not selfish enough. Organizations have to control life and death—like Olsen's little group, "We Bob's."

(STEPHEN DORNEMAN) In *HoL* #21 you ask me what kind of hobby-wide organization would be good enough to earn my support? How about something like this...

The International Diplomacy Gamers Association (IDGA)

The IDGA is a non-profit organization formed to promote the playing (whether face-to-face, by post, by electronic mail, or by any other means) throughout the world of the game Diplomacy. Published in the United States by the Avalon Hill Game Company, Diplomacy is a game of negotiation and conflict that simulates the interactions of seven great European powers prior to World War I.

To further its goal of promoting the play of Diplomacy, the officers of the IDGA are charged to use the resources of the IDGA to:

Sponsor Diplomacy tournaments.

Publish a Diplomacy magazine (zeen) as a forum for the postal play of Diplomacy, with a particular orientation towards novice postal

players.

Prepare and provide novice packet(s) for people who request information about Diplomacy.

Advertise for the organization, for the organization's zeen, and/or the organization's novice packet(s) in various gaming magazines, both professional and amateur.

Prepare and publish various ratings systems so that players of Diplomacy can compare their performances with other players'.

Other possible, but not mandated, activities for the IDGA include establishing a Diplomacy Publisher's Resource Center, maintaining an Electronic Archives of names, addresses, publishing information, etc, about its members, providing an Ombudsman Service for game disputes, etc.

How would such an organization come about? Well, as most organizations do, one person or a small number of persons would start it up with or without a formal structure. Then to insure its continuation after the founders had moved on to other activities, some formal charter should be drawn up, perhaps at the same time that the organization applies for official sanction as a non-profit corporation.

Probably there should be a president, elected every one or two years from the membership, and yearly dues to be paid by each member—dues that would pay for the various activities mandated above, and in return the member would receive a copy of the organization's zeen, would have voting rights, and would be eligible to participate in organization-sponsored events and services at a discount. The IDGA would also look for corporate funding from Avalon Hill and the other worldwide publishers of Diplomacy.

That would be a hobby organization that I would be happy to support.

[Congratulations, you have just reinvented (in large part) the New York Game Board. And just about every other dipdom organization that's ever come along, as far as I know. I wonder what set of circumstances have to exist before the organizers decide it's time to try again, and the organizees decide to go along for the ride. The IDA/etc were just a bit before my time, so I can shed no light there.]

(DON DEL GRANDE) If the hobby ever does get organized, the first thing that should be done is a total reclarification of the rules. The 1982 rules, in addition to being pretty much ignored by the hobby, still don't handle the "unwanted convoy"

and “two convoy routes” problems sufficiently. (My ideas: an army that wants to, or has to, be convoyed must put the route of the convoy in the army’s order—for example, “A Bel-Nth-Hol” (to convoy to an adjacent land area) or “A Edi-Nwg-Nwy” (when given a choice of Fleet Norwegian Sea or Fleet North Sea).)

[Why should hobby organization precede clarification of something as basic as the rules of the game? If you think it should be done, write up a new set and start passing them around. Eventually AH might get a copy (after all, Uncle Rex gets this zeen, so he’s onto your scam), thank you for doing their work for free, and adopt them as the official set.]

out of dipdom

(**RICH MCKEY**) Jellyfish. Now there is a topic worth talking about. When I was in the Navy and returning to Norfolk on my very last sea-detail, at 21 and a wake-up, I had the distinct good fortune to be offered a most delicate mission. I am still not at liberty to say what that mission was, but I felt my blood quicken as I stretched my protective gear across my rippling torso, picked my aide, and strode forward beneath the lowering heavens.

The fog was thick about me as I and my faithful underling, Bill, tried to pierce its grey shrouds and discover what lay beyond. And then I saw them.

They were devilishly clever, these jellyfish, but jellyfish nonetheless. Concentrating their numbers in an attempt to overwhelm our tiny cruiser, they were congregated in an unerringly straight line, stretching from Cape Henry to the east, as far as the eye could see. And they lay dead ahead of us as we plunged deeper into their trap!

Snapping commands to my lackey, I apprised the bridge of this heinous occurrence and asked for orders. But the captain (who shall remain nameless here in respect for his dignity) had upon receipt of this terrible information been reduced to sobbing terror. I was forced to take command.

Guessing that the cagey little buggers would be no match for modern fire power, I issued orders that our forward missile battery was to go into action immediately. As the blasts would be too much for anyone up forward to withstand, Bill and I would just have to cover our ears and pray for our salvation. There was no time to lose.

Well though I knew that my very life was in imminent peril, I had the presence of mind to keep my eyes open through what followed. Down upon

the thin, pale line we charged. We were hopelessly outnumbered, but our missiles, which shredded the sky and tore at the water, wreaked havoc among their ranks until, finally, they broke before us and we were through.

Heaving my mighty frame from the deck (I had stumbled during the launch of a pair of birds and thus happily avoided a serious blow to my pate), I surveyed the scene. Far astern now, I could see the shattered ranks of the little devils fleeing in utter rout. I have to admit that I toyed with the idea of harassing them further, but my Christian instincts had the better of me. I let them go to carry a warning to jellyfish everywhere of the wrath of the USN.

And so we steamed into Norfolk, wreathed in glory.

Actually much of the above is true. Three weeks before I got out of the Squid Club, I was allowed to go out on low-vis watch during sea detail, and we did see this line of jellyfish. (And I did pull rank to force the guy with me to wear the ‘phones—I hated those things.) We did *not*, however, take ‘em with ‘poons, and I did *not* have very much (read “any”) opportunity to issue orders to the bridge. But the fog that day, and that line of jellyfish, stretched as far as the eye could see in either direction...I’ve never seen the like! Absolutely amazing!

[Whew, another death-defying tale of our boys in uniform...and with the current state of our navy, we are doubly glad that you survived the ordeal!]

polls & awards

(**DON DEL GRANDE**) Do you intend on calling it “the Brosius poll”? (And speaking of polls, bad news—the Lifers are held in the winter.)

[Haven’t made up my mind. Doubt I’ll call it by the “R”-word, though.]

(**PETE GAUGHAN**) The 1990 Marco Poll (polling period will probably be December and January) will meet your definition of a perfect poll. I’m convinced. In line with this, zeens which don’t finish in the top ten (or maybe top 25%?) will just be noted, alphabetically, as also receiving votes, or some such. (What does Del Dumb mean by “Like the Marco Poll used to be”—what time zone is he calling in from?)

[Pacific Earthquake Time.]

(JOHN CARUSO) I like George Mann's system except for one aspect—zeens that have a larger circulation have a decided advantage over smaller circulation zeens. Same for GMs of many games over a GM of one or two games. All George's system is, basically, is the Marco Poll.

However, George's quest for Poll complainers' opinions to better The Poll are well taken. Unfortunately, many ideas have been given to The Pollster to help make the results more accurate. Most of this advice was ignored or simply rejected by The Pollster. The only advice not rejected was advice given from The Pollster's closest supporters. Mind you—not The Poll's closest supporters, but The Pollster's Personal supporters. The only reason the flak got so hot and heavy over The Poll was because The Pollster refused to hear his non-supporters' advice. Maybe I'm crazy (we know that, John), but here is a list of some of the advice given to The Pollster from his non-supporters since 1985.

1. Don't phone people to solicit votes.
2. Don't mail out ballots to half of Dipdom and not the other half. (Called Selective Mailings.) Mail to all or none. Set a consistent pattern.
3. Try to dissuade non-subbers from voting on zeens they don't sub to. Pollster himself is admittedly guilty of this.
4. Stop the practice of repeated attempts (harassment) to get ballots out of people.
5. Allow pubbers to see who voted for their zeens (but not what they voted). This can verify #3.
6. Don't attack those who do not participate. Do these fit your quest, George?

[And you forgot:

- [7) Shorter polling period.
- [8) Exclude zeens/GMs who do not wish to participate.
- [9) What is the air speed of a swallow?
- [10) Avoid the dreaded enumeration in silly lists of this sort.]

(GEORGE MANN) Your answer to my question of what would be a "perfect" poll was "...one that doesn't rate me or the zeens I publish,...." That's mighty childish, in my opinion. Do television shows refuse to be rated by Nielsen, do baseball players refuse to be voted on for the All-Star game, et cetera, et cetera. Once you're out in the public eye and someone wants to rate you in comparison with other zeens (in this particular case), you will be rated. If you don't want to be rated as a zeen, then cease being a zeen and become a letter to your friends only. The next thing

you'll say is that you don't want to be counted in the 1990 Census. (Not a bad idea. If they don't count you, then you don't exist, then you don't have to pay taxes!) As for being attacked for not participating, I don't know such details (I guess it's part of the feud), but I wouldn't blame you for retaliating. It's a free choice to participate or not, and no one should be harassed for such a decision. Take the USA which, other than Botswana, has the lowest voter turnout in the world.

[So it's childish to not want to participate in the Linsey poll. Well, that's your opinion, and you're certainly entitled to it, but to compare the Linsey poll to the Nielsens, or the all-star game is kinda silly. The Nielsens aren't a popularity poll so much—they don't care if you like the shows you're watching. They're used just to determine what advertisers have to pay to run their ads in particular time slots. Players have passed on playing in all-star games in the past, and again, this is a matter of big bucks. You can bet that the players want to participate because it means a big raise when contract time rolls around. The "rewards" for scoring high in one of these polls are personal satisfaction (which I don't need a poll for), and publicity to draw new subbers (not having any game openings, I'd rather keep a low profile). And why is it "childish" to want out, but not childish to insist that everybody participate? Would calling a zeen "a letter to my friends" really make a bit of difference?]

(MARK NELSON) In reply to Jim Burgess: anyone who leaves the Hobby because of a poor Poll Result shouldn't be pubbing. You should be glad they left! Boy, I keep getting these Gerykian leanings....

A pubber may prefer that people didn't discuss his zeen, but in reality other editors and readers will have already commented upon his zeen. Don't the subscribers get a chance to say what they thought or think about his zeen? Let's carry your comments to their logical conclusion. Sorry, don't want you to mention my name in any letters you write to anyone. No doubt you'd be the first to complain if the Republicans decided to have an official censor to ensure there was no destructive criticism of their government. Roll on, Stalin.

But that's what is so good about your zeen. One issue someone can state his view, and the next issue someone writes in offering a completely different viewpoint. I've reconsidered my view in light of Jim's comments, but I'm sticking to my original comments. People who trade or sub to a

zeen have the right to pass comment on it.

[If somebody wants to write a review of my zeens, I've got no problem with that. That would tell me something. Poll results are too vague, and tell me nothing.

[Let's carry your comments to their logical conclusion: all polls are accurate, and well-meaning. Even sham elections are good elections. Roll on, Noriega.]

(MARK LEW) I went to high school with John Fisher. We were good friends in junior high, but then his family moved out of state for a few years. When he came back we weren't so close, but he was still a not-too-distant acquaintance (to be called on when a multi-player game needed an extra player or two). John is in the military, in some fancy branch—special operations intelligence or something like that. Last I heard (this spring, I think it was) he was in West Germany.

(DAVID HOOD) I just wanted to say one thing about this "John Fisher" rap. I *thought* Kathy's characterization of him as just a Linseyite in the Hobby to vote in the Poll sounded dubious, so I checked it out in my (admitted limited) set of back issues. In *Ohio Acres* #17 and #18, Fisher published a subzeen called *The Pocket General*. If I remember correctly, the reason he stopped it, and indeed dropped out entirely, is because he was shipped off to Germany while in the armed forces. He got tired of the mail delays. That hardly sounds like a fake hobbyist to me—actually, the subzeen was full of articles and stuff that I doubt someone with a passing Diplomacy interest would have put together. Anyway, Kathy plays in *OA* and may have the back issues herself, in which case we can put this issue to rest.

[I think John Fisher is tired enough now to deserve a good, long rest.]

(MARK BERCH) With regard to the business about John Fisher, *HoL* printed a harsh attack on John Fisher. It didn't jive with what I already knew about him, so I investigated further and wrote up a very different account—which you refused to run. That strikes me as rather one-sided. You reply, "All that 'garbage' ((Berch's word)) about John Fisher is true. At least as far as the facts are concerned—their interpretation is open for question." I absolutely disagree—I say the facts *were* wrong. And if your readers can't see my letter, how are they going to sort this out—as to

whether it's "facts" or "interpretation"??? And even if it is 100% a matter of interpretation, why is it that Kathy's interpretation can be run in *HoL*, but Berch's cannot?

This same goes for this: "His ((Fisher's)) choice of zeens appear to have been influenced by Linsey in a somewhat duplicitous manner." Are you a telepath? If not, how do you know what "influenced" him? And just what was his "choice of zeens"? Your readers have only been permitted to see Kathy's list, and that was, shall we say, a rather incomplete list. To get a fuller list—and Fisher's own comments on his participation in the Runestone Poll (which was the actual topic of Kathy's letter), your readers need to see my letter—and you won't let them do that.

You say you want a letter from me to be "to the point." The point is that you ran a letter which I say had an inaccurate description of Fisher's activities, and, if John is telling the truth, Kathy knew it was inaccurate. And you won't allow a rebuttal letter. Why?

[Kathy's "interpretation" runs three paragraphs, yours runs three pages. I don't need the overkill on a relatively trivial incident, and I doubt the readers are that interested either. Make your point and leave out all the extra glop—we'll all be happier for it. You made some good points, but not enough to warrant my wading through the mess you sent.

[But if any of you readers want to know the whole sordid tale of John Fisher's brief stay in dipdom, you know who to ask.

[Yes, I am a telepath. Since you didn't know that, one can only assume that you are not.

[Your characterization of what we printed here as a "harsh attack" is simply ridiculous. In fact, Fisher is merely portrayed as just another guy who dropped out of dipdom without leaving a forwarding address. And that is an accurate portrayal. Don't play the self-righteous defender of poor, maligned John Fisher with me, cause I don't buy it for a second. Your hidden agenda is showing....]

ratings & scoring systems

(PETE GAUGHAN) I guess the fact that I think three two-ways is worth more than a win and two eliminations shows why you've got a "Ratings" section.

(MARK LEW) Eric Brosius complains about tournament rating systems "counting a two-way

and a three-way as equal to a win." Nobody wants to count a draw as equal to a win. We say that a two-way draw is as good as *half* a win. (In fact, it is half a win.) What's so hard about that? Don't people know how to add fractions anymore?

(JOHN CARUSO) Something a lot of people fail to recognize—including Eric Brosius—a two-way draw is a two-way win. A split victory. It's not a loss. A second place finish to a win is a loss. So three second place finishes to three wins, opposed to a win and two losses—the win and two losses should rate higher.

A rating system that I always preferred and is simple: you get one point for every person you beat out. Example: First eliminated gets 0 points, second gets 1 point. If third and fourth are tied, they divide 5 points and get 2.5 each. A win gets 6 points. A two-way draw splits 11 points for 5.5 each. Non-winners/drawers are seated by supply center count at the end of the game.

The system Steve Langley mentions (the AREA system) is another good one. In fact, it's probably better than mine above.

(ROBERT SACKS) Back in '75 I ran a tournament where the best in country the first day did play the same country on the top board the second day, and did I get complaints. One player insisted he tried so hard the first day because he wanted to get onto a good board and play a different position.

(MARK NELSON) I believe that rating systems should include some mechanism to take account of how near someone came to winning. So in my own system a 14-center power scores slightly more than a 10-center power in a 14-10-10 because he has come slightly nearer to winning. If this isn't the case, then Jeff McKee's idea is nonsense. He says that (a) the number of players in a draw is irrelevant and (b) the number of centers in a draw is irrelevant. So a 7-way draw agreed in Spring 1901 scores as well as any other draw! Why play the game?

In reply to Paul Milewski: there was an article in the 1973 IDA Handbook (possibly the 74 one—don't quote me on which one!) which examined if the ratings of players before the game started had any relevance to the final result. I don't recall which rating system was used, *but* players with a better rating seemed to get better results than players with a low rating.

[That would make sense, wouldn't it?]

(DON DEL GRANDE) Re Jeff McKee's comment that SCs should not be considered for players in draws: if a game ends as a forced 16-16-1-1 DIAS draw (because of a time limit), the players with 16 certainly did better than the players with 1 and should be rewarded appropriately. And nobody in the Dipcon tournament knew that SCs would be a factor in the scoring system, although I admit that there are very few (if any) systems that penalize players for having more SCs in draws, so they had nothing to lose. Even in a win/draw system using DIAS, the players have to work out how to eliminate the stragglers. As for the "best country top board"—that's how the final board was determined at ORIGINS 1988.

(KAREL ALARIC) IDTR belongs to the silly faction *and* the serious faction. Del Grande think it's serious and everybody else knows better. Imagine sending in results year after year and seeing them blended by a food processor into a meaningless puree of numbers. No wonder Del Grande doesn't get the cooperation he desires.

(LARRY CRONIN) Having just returned from Dipcon XXII, where Don Del Grande did a wonderful impersonation of classic "Peeriblah" while explaining the tournament scoring, I was inspired to attempt a new *simplified* scoring system which should reflect most people's concerns in evaluating games. It is ideally suited to evaluating tournaments.

This system has two complementary parts. There are 34 points on the board. Thus:

Wins=34 points
Two-way draw=17 points each
Three-way draw=11 points each
Four-way draw=8 points each
Five-way draw=7 points each
Six-way draw=6 points each
Seven-way draw=5 points each

To these points are added the number of supply centers a player has at the end of the game. Thus an 18- or 19-center win yields a score of 52 or 53, while a concession would yield 18 plus the number of centers at the time of concession. All remaining players get points for the numbers of centers they have. Concession votes would not necessarily have to be unanimous, but could include all except the winner. This rewards a struggle to survive, but also encourages concession in hopeless games. An example: if all players survive and vote on a 3-way draw, those 3 get 11 points each plus their respective number of supply centers. Other players get only the number of supply centers they have at

the time of the draw.

Note that no draw situation rewards a player more than a win. Players are rewarded for being counted in on the draw, for surviving, and for conceding in hopeless situations.

This method can be further adapted in tournaments to discourage reckless or promiscuous play by averaging the scores. Total points can be divided by the number of games a player was in, yielding a "batting average" of sorts. A minimum number of games could be required. This scoring method is ideally suited to gunboat games and tournaments also.

This certainly is a faster, more easily understood method, by which players can understand their performance and make decisions about their "score" outcome in a given, tournament, or dip career. It fundamentally corresponds with the spirit of the game envisioned by its creator and most good players, and it agrees with historical realities in Europe.

(MARC HANNA) I do admire Milewski's keen analysis of what a true rating system would require, yet one wonders why he would waste his time, since it is clear that no rating system will fairly take into account my stupendous sexual capabilities and correlate them, with due causality, to my ability to stiffly saturate any possible model.

women

(JOHN CARUSO) Uh oh, Linda Courtemanche is claiming that Tim Moore rented Audrey Jaxon! Can I rent someone too? No, I don't want to rent Bob Olsen.

(GEORGE MANN) How 'bout a Dip game with just women players? Let's see the hair fly.

[It's been done before, several times. And you know, the hair flies better in the all-male games.]

(PAUL KENNY) Men vs Over Women: There is an inherent advantage of men over women. Men can drink more beer than women. Men tend to weigh more (due to men having more mass) and therefore can enjoy and savor the taste of beer for a longer period of time. This is necessary especially when one's favorite sport goes into extra innings or overtime. One still will need a clear enough head (and not the one in the glass) to be able to remember how the game ended so to be able to argue properly about it (the game) the next day.

Now if you are a woman, then after a couple brews your head is already spinning (or, from your point of view, the room won't stay still), and by halftime it's bedtime for Bonzo. No wonder most women never understand sports. They can't keep their attention on both the game and holding up the floor.

On the up side for those of the softer sex, women can get a buzz on less beer. Saves money.

Actually I would hope neither the women nor men reading this take it too seriously. I mean, ya gotta hand it to them for being so weak in the first place so we superior males could poke fun at them.

the old guard

Following is a list of Dip game zeens that have been in continuous publication since at least 1984, the dates of their first issue, and publisher.

<i>Graustark</i>	May 63	Boardman
<i>Boast</i>	Sep 71	Barents
<i>Bushwacker</i>	Mar 72	Davis
<i>Western Star Dippy</i>	July 72	Benes
<i>Diplomag</i>	July 76	Davis
<i>Ter-Ran</i>	May 77	Heinowski
<i>Kathy's Korner</i>	Jan 79	Caruso
<i>Cheesecake</i>	Mar 79	Lischett
<i>Retaliation</i>	June 79	Martin
<i>Life Of Monty!</i>	June 80	Del Grande
<i>Gamer's Zine</i>	July 81	Whiskeyman
<i>Magus</i>	Aug 82	Langley
<i>Vertigo</i>	Aug 82	Wilson
<i>Perelandra</i>	June 82	Gaughan
<i>Armchair Diplomat</i>	Sep 82	Hill
<i>The Prince</i>	Sep 82	Meinel
<i>Fiat Bellum!</i>	Oct 82	Williams
<i>Appalachian General</i>	Aug 83	McCrumb
<i>Cathy's Ramblings</i>	Oct 83	Ozog
<i>Not New York</i>	Nov 84	Gardner
<i>Rebel</i>	Nov 84	Holley
<i>Canadian Diplomat</i>	Dec 84	Acheson

[Don Del Grande has supposedly changed the name of *Life of Monty* to something else, but I've managed to block that from my memory. Only one zeen that started in 1985 is still going, Bruce McIntyre's *Excelsior*. I don't know if that one's been published continuously since then, though.

[Folded since the last time I did this: *Fol Si Fie*, *Feuilletonist's Forum*, *Frobazz*, *Hai Jikai!* and *Touché*. It's been a bad time for the "F" zeens. Even *Fiat Bellum* has been shaky lately!

[And now for a quick game of Supremacy!]

new topic: the future

Well, here we are in the 1990s already. And what does dipdom have in its future? Well, let me look in my crystal ball....

PBEM dip will continue to gain in popularity, though very slowly. The limiting factor will be the disunity of the electronic media. CompuServe doesn't easily connect to Portal which doesn't connect to the local bulletin board which doesn't connect to Prodigy (but who cares?) which doesn't connect to America Online...and so forth. Unless the electronic services start working together, pbem will stagnate at current levels or slightly higher. The vast majority of dipzeens will still be operating via snail mail into the twenty first century.

There will be another postal dip tournament, as interest in playing the game well makes a comeback. Hopefully, it'll be done right this time. (I had planned on trying this myself later this year, but circumstances have ruled that out. My plan was to run the tournament in a single zeen, using a single GM and a secret scoring system.) Political necessities played too big a part in the first tournament, as too many people had a hand in running the show—an enlightened tyrant is more appropriate than the democratic system used. The main failings of the first tournament were that the tournament took too long to start after being announced, the semi-secret status of the games, too

many countries in CD too early, players had no incentive to play out weak positions, and some of the GMs folded in mid-tournament. If these pitfalls are avoided a tournament could work.

There will be a large, though relatively mild compared to what we're used to, feud in the mid-nineties.

We'll all give up on Diplomacy and switch to Avalon Hill's 1830 instead.

What worries me is that there don't seem to be any really clever ideas popping up these days. Has everything interesting been tried? I don't think so, but imagination is in short supply. So treasure Larry Peery while he's still around. He may come up with some wacky ideas, but at the least Larry's pushing the envelope for the rest of us.

Late-Breaking News:**Julie turns MNC/UC over to Brad Wilson**

"Now the time has come for me to leave you. With me starting law school this fall and Dick cutting all the *HoL/LoH* trades, I will no longer have the time or the resources to do this job properly. I have chosen one from among you to take my place. He is Brad Wilson (PO Box 126, Wayne, PA 19087). Heed his words as though they were my own."

✉ **return address** ✉

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first class